

DIB DIB DIB

40



40p

No cowboy zine is DIB of course,
but just as essential as a cowpoke's
horse,
He won't ride across deserts horseless
will he?
And like Dibless men, will lool
damn silly!

This is Dib Dib Dib 40 - a merry little games zine catering for those with taste, who like chat, wit, or whatever with their games, and don't mind roughing it with the likes of yours truly who's getting to hate doing these colophons. Cost of this issue is 40p in the UK, 50p to Europe, and must be getting on for £1, though I'm not sure, to America. And comes to you from Tom Tweedy, of 29 Stanley Hill Avenue, Amersham, Bucks., HP7 9BD. Tel. 02403 4513.

EDITORIAL

[CONGRATULATIONS to John & Pat Piggott for adding once again to the world's population explosion. On May 26th; 2.10 am, weighing in at 8lb 13oz (that's heavy, John!) is one Matthew James Piggott. Right, where's all our cigars, John?]

First, I'd like to apologise for the harshness of the stock "lack of credit" reminder some of you got last time. Please remember, it is only a reminder, and not a personal insult. If you can think of a better way of wording the reminder by all means write and let me know. It's always hard to be diplomatic when asking for money. Well, that's that out of the way...

Now for another important but unsavoury subject. I'm afraid the cost of Dib will have to go up to 40p an issue in the UK, and 50p to Europe. The reason for the price rise is worked out below. It's the first time I've done it but I found out over a longish period I've been steadily making a loss. It's not that much of a loss, and most certainly I can, and do, subsidise my hobby to a certain extent. However, with the threat of rising postal charges, and the rising cost of stationary, I feel it would be a good idea to bring the price up on par with other zines in this hobby. I've kept the price down for as long as possible, but not many zines can afford to sell at 35p any more. This is what I use per issue:-

STATIONARY		STAMPS + STATIONARY	
1 tube ink	£ 7.96	24 @ 12½p	£ 3.00
26 stencils	£ 3.70	90 @ 16p	£14.40
120 Envelopes	£ 2.40		-----
3½ reams paper	£13.49		£17.40
1 Contact sheet	£ 20p	+ STATIONARY	£31.95
	-----		-----
	£27.75	TO PRODUCE 115 ZINES	£49.35
	-----	90 SUBSCRIBERS @ 35p	£31.50 -
15% VAT	£ 4.20		-----
	-----	OUT OF POCKET	£17.85
TOTAL	£31.95		

Since I worked this out my subscribers and trades have gone up another 8 or 9, not that it changes things much. Even at 40p an issue I'll be subsidising my hobby to the tune of approx £10 a month. Which makes things a little more respectable I suppose. Pay up now, pay up, it's all in a good cause; keeping Tweedy, and therefore Dib, solvent.

Last month wasn't a good time for me. I/we had to get the latest addition of Spots of News out, the same time as Jan was decorating the dining room (under my supervision of course) and a decorator was doing the outside of our house. Not a good working atmosphere conducive to typing up this kind of magazine I can tell you. Nevertheless, all seemed to be going well because eventually we got it all typed up into the computer. But just as we started to print the lot out, the bloody printer packed in - and we only had two days to get the magazine out.

To cut a long story short, the printer had to go away twice to be mended and the bill came to £125. On top of that we had to hire another printer to do the labels (a matrix printer, because no way could we do 900 subscriber labels

by hand), and another typewriter to cut the stencils manually. This meant of course retyping everything we had put into the computer, again. Jan did most of the typing because by this time I couldn't really face it. Where she gets her drive from I really don't know. As it was the typewriter didn't cut the stencils very well anyway. I can see now what Richard Morris means about Roneo contact sheets not being much use to him - not all daisywheels will cut stencils; even if they have a stencil-cutting position as this one (an Olympia ESW 101) had. I guess, all in all, you could say I've been lucky with my choice of the ESW 103, but at the moment it sure as hell doesn't feel like it.

The next issue of Dib will have a longer deadline! The main reason is that many of you have asked about double deadlines to cover holidays (a few of you have mentioned things might be difficult as you're flitting all over the place). Also, Della (our Dalmatian bitch) is having the puppies sometime next week, I want to make sure I'm not printing up issue 41 while the puppies are here. Mind you, if some players still want their games adjudicated, by all means say so. Get your orders in early, and if I get a complete set in a reasonable time (i.e. in about 4 weeks) I'll send out a single printed sheet to all players concerned. Printing is easy, it's the duplicating because the duplicator is beside the whelping box that's the problem. Ah, such is life.... I suppose I could well do with a Summer break from doing the zine myself anyway.

A couple of new zines have recently come my way asking for plugs and trades - and very nice-looking zines they were indeed. Quartz was such a one, edited by Geoff Kemp. Now on issue 6, A4 litho (or very good photocopy) with plenty of good artwork and a literate style. Quartz is a (an?) SF-based zine and, as Geoff says, is trying hard to break into the gaming hobby, much to the disgust of his SF peers, by running Diplomacy (50p), Sopwith (50p), Formula One (50p), Scrabble (Free), Chess (Free), and Judge Dredd (also free) - and from what I've seen of Q already, it'll make a successful and damn good job of it. Recommended. Geoff Kemp, 23 Raygill, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffs, B77 4JY.

After a disastrous start issue 2 of The Guilder was much better this time. TG has co-editors William Whyte and Damian Maddalena writing for it, and is financed by The Modeller's Nook shop. This being the case they manage to have it printed up by Martin Le Fevre whilst charging only 30p an issue. William tells me his print run is 200, and his backer, TMN, hope to make some profit out of it. I didn't have the heart to tell him how much he might actually lose on this type of venture - but I guess he must be getting some idea by now. Still, he hopes to follow the example of The Acolyte by having the mag. sold over the counter. At the moment they're looking for other shops to take it on so if anyone has any ideas... I wish both Damian and William well, but can't help feeling that their hope of making a profit in this way might be doomed to failure. They'll be competing in the hobby with other, much more professional-looking magazines in the same field.

Two such magazines, both at issue 1, are Ground Zero and Morrigan. A5 booklet form, litho produced, centre stapled, these are the best looking zines I've seen in a while. Oh I know we've had A5 litho booklets before - Dolchstoss, Psychopath etc - but these seem different. Maybe it's because of the SF/Fantasy content, but more than that I think it's the artwork. More and more SF zines seem to be breaking into the hobby lately, introducing lots of lavish artwork, far more than the ordinary games zine would use. In some cases it looks good, as in the case of Morrigan, in others it can sometimes be a trifle overdone. In GZ for instance there was a couple of unnecessary 'pics' and letraset smack in the middle of the lettercolumn, making some of the letters (one, a very interesting letter on martial arts) very difficult to read. Also there was the tendency to cram writing in sideways, and slot in little pieces of handwriting (reduced to a point where it couldn't be read anyway). All in all though both magazines are superb.

(Incidentally, while I'm on this subject of artwork, the last Psychopath has adopted this latest trend to great effect. I wonder if in future this will be the way of things - are mimeo zines on the way out? There's still quite a few of

us who would hate to hand our printing over to someone else.)

Ground Zero is edited by Neil Hopkins, who's 18 years old, and will be going to Sheffield University in October (I hope this won't have any adverse effect on such an excellent start as some moves to University do). Mind you, Neil can be forgiven some holdups I suppose, any man discerning enough to like Hill Street Blues can't be all bad can he? Anyway GZ is 20 pages long and has game openings for Sopwith, a very interesting Sopwith-like variant called Asteroid Dogfight (using asteroids instead of clouds, and much more rules), Dune, Aces of Aces, Murder of the Orient Express, and of course Diplomacy. I can't see prices, or cost of the zine anywhere, but highly recommend you write off to see a copy and ask to see the Asteroid Dogfight rules.

Neil Hopkins, 8 Highfield Avenue, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 5UA.

Morrigan - this zine has a regular production team working for it, consisting of: Paul Archer, Pete Best, Alan Kennedy, Stephen Lewis, Philip Murphy, and John Scott. Philip Murphy did the editorial this issue and is the main editor, but the idea seems to be if one of the team doesn't feel up to doing something, another can take over. This way of producing a zine appears rather cumbersome to me, but there's no denying it, the final result of issue 1 was excellent. Some very interesting articles on Irish/Celtic legends (little difficult to read because of the script typing, but beautifully laid out nevertheless with scrollwork and dragon edgings), an article on Dragons, and a translation (from the Latin, naturally) of Necronomicon (?). As for game openings... anything the readers want, but, at the moment proposes Title Bout, Diplomacy, Diplomacy variants, 1829, Kingmaker; War of the Roses, Formula 1, Speed Circuit, Judge Dread, Catsclaw Island, etc, and bloody etc. Not sure what the zine costs (the first issue was free) but all games will cost £1 gamefee with £1 refundable deposit, though some simpler games will be 50p. How can us single editors hope to compete with this sort of games selection?! Subscription and trade inquiries to Stephen Lewis, 8 Norwood Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2EE, Northern Ireland. Tel. (0232) 651921.

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ZINE POLL GAME

Guess the first five placings in this year's Zine Poll in the correct order (if possible). Collected prize (now standing at 75p) goes to the closest guess. Only four of us so far, but if you fancy your chances, send in a guess next time. I'll keep excepting guesses up until the Poll deadline. Gamefee 25p.

- TOM TWEEDY: Mad Policy, Greatest Hits, Dolchstoss, Acolyte, Hopscotch.
- GEORGE NORTH: Hopscotch, Astradyne, RapsCALLION, Dib Dib Dib, Greatest Hits.
- NICHOLAS WHYTE: Acolyte, Dolchstoss, Mad Policy, RapsCALLION, Dib Dib Dib.
- SIMON CRADDOCK: Greatest Hits, Mad Policy, Acolyte, NMR!, Dolchstoss.

((Dib beating Greatest Hits?! C'mon, George...! I can't help feeling you've thrown 25p away on this guess.... but it's in now so it'll have to stand. And you, Nicholas, you don't think GH will be in the top five at all? He has won it the last 3 years you know.))

Zine Poll '84 Deadline: 19th July 1984. Send Poll votes to Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 6PG.

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SOPWITH:

Is there anyone out there willing to GM a Sopwith game? If so, please let me know before the next deadline as I would like to start another game but with the proviso that I don't have to GM it.

DRINKER'S FAULT FINDING CHART
from Martin Ives

SYMPTOM	FAULT	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
Drinking fail to give satisfaction and taste, shirt front wet.	Mouth not open while drinking or glass being applied to wrong part of the face.	Buy another pint, and practice in front of mirror. Drink as is necessary until drinking technique is perfect.
Drinking fails to give satisfaction and taste beer unusually pale and clear.	Glass empty.	Find someone who will buy you another pint.
Feet cold and wet.	Glass being held at incorrect angle.	Turn glass the other way up so that open end is pointing towards the ceiling.
Feet warm and wet.	Incorrect bladder control.	Go and stand next to the nearest dog - after a while complain to the owner about its lack of house training. Demand a pint as compensation.
Bar blurred.	You are looking through the bottom of your empty glass.	Find someone who will buy you another pint.
Bar swaying.	Air turbulence is unusually high - may be due to darts match in progress.	Insert broom handle down back of jacket.
Bar moving.	You are being carried out.	Find out if you're being taken to another pub - if not, complain loudly that you are being highjacked by the Salvation Army.
You notice that the wall opposite is covered with ceiling tiles, and has a fluorescent light strip across it.	You have fallen over backwards.	If your glass is still full, and no-one is standing on your drinking arm stay put. If not get someone to help you up and lash yourself to the bar.
Everything has gone dim, you have a mouthful of dog-ends and broken teeth.	You have fallen over forwards.	See above.
Everything has gone dark.	The pub is closing.	Panic.
You have woken up to find your bed hard cold and wet. You cannot see your bedroom walls or ceiling.	You have spent the night in the gutter.	Check your watch to see if it's opening time - if not treat yourself to a lay-in.

SOPWITH STATS 6

These are the latest Sopwith stats from Richard Morris, 1 Highland Ville, Lightcliffe, Halifax, HX3 8AG - all based on adjudications received by him up to 11th May 1984. Anyone wanting to see the full set of stats, it will cost you 5p + postage. If, like one player, John Bycroft, you gained enough points to become an Ace, but only after the stats deadline, then I'm sorry. All I can advise is, stick in there and hope the next set of stats comes out quick. It's a bit harsh on some players I know, but what other choice does Richard have? When he took the stats job on, he didn't know he would get bogged down producing his own zine. (Why do you think I gave them up, Richard?)

First, the Aces List....

ACES HIGH

Tom Tweedy	104	So, this is it, once again I'm at the top where I so
Richard Morris	82	rightly belong. But there isn't enough of us - the only
Brian Moore	70	new ace since last time is Nick Hoyle. I'm beginning to
Nicholas Clifton	68	wonder, is the 40 point criteria a bit hard to reach?
Dave Tant	66	Richard Morris thinks not; as he's seriously considering
Sandy Peters	62	raising the Ace limit to 50 or 60 in the 8th set of
Frank Dunn	49	stats (due about April 1985). If you object, then let
Rob Chapman	48	him know. I wonder what will happen to the bottom 3 that
Nick Hoyle	41	are already Aces - Richard?

SOPWITH RECORDS

MOST POINTS IN ONE GAME:	55	Tom Tweedy	DDD REDWING
	50	Richard Morris	DDD RAVEN
	48	Brian Moore	DDD PELICAN (incomplete)
MOST POINTS NOT WINNING:	22	Brian Moore	HOPSCOTCH GOTHA
	21	Sandy Peters	DDD MUDLARK
	21	Sandy Peters	HOPSCOTCH RICHTHOFEN
	15	Rob Chapman	DDD RAVEN
WORST PERFORMANCE:	-5 (Turn 3, Move 2)	Mike Allaway	LOKASENNA AVRO 504
	-5 (Turn 4, Move 2)	Peter Cowling	DDD PELICAN
	-5 (Turn 4, Move 2)	Robert Lozynskyj	DDD REDWING
	-5 (Turn 4, Move 3)	Martin Allen	DDD KINGFISHER
	-5 (Turn 4, Move 3)	Martin Mills	HTL BLUEBOTTLE
WORST ACE PERFORMANCE:	-5 (Turn 6, Move 1)	Brian Moore	THING ON THE MAT 9
WORST WINNING PERFORMANCE:	8	Keith Loveys	DDD MUDLARK
	9	Len George	HOPSCOTCH RICHTHOFEN
MOST WINS:	2	Frank Dunn	
	2	Tom Tweedy	
MOST KILLS IN ONE GAME:	3	Richard Morris	DDD RAVEN
	3	Sandy Peters	HOPSCOTCH RICHTHOFEN
	3	Brian Moore	DDD PELICAN
QUICKEST WIN:	Turn 10, Move 3	Len George	HOPSCOTCH RICHTHOFEN
SLOWEST WIN:	Turn 24, Move 1	Dave Tant	DDD KESTREL
	Turn 23, Move 3	Ian Tillson	DDD KINGISHER

SOPWITH RATINGS LIST

Pos	Name	Rating	Gms	Pts	Best	Pos	Name	Rating	Gms	Pts	Best
1.	Ian Tillson	33	1	33	33		Brian Dolton	2	1	2	2
2.	Richard Morris	29	2	58	50		John Field	2	2	4	6

SOPWITH RATINGS LIST cont.

Pos	Name	Rating	Gms	Pts	Best	Pos	Name	Rating	Gms	Pts	Best
3.	Ray Miller	27	1	27	27		Dave Shelley	2	1	2	2
4.	Brian Douglas	26	1	26	26	41.	Keith Loveys	1.5	4	6	8
5.	Frank Dunn	24.5	2	49	26	42.	Alec Winton	1.33	3	4	7
6.	Tom Tweedy	24	4	96	55	43.	Mick Antrobus	1	4	4	10
7.	Ivo Steyn	21	1	21	21		Paul Cowling	1	1	1	1
8.	Nick Hoyle	14	1	14	14		Karl Piper	1	1	1	1
9.	Dave Tant	13.33	3	40	26	46.	Martin Mills	0.16	6	1	8
10.	Sandy Peters	12.4	5	62	21	47.	Colin Bruce	0	1	0	0
11.	Mike Grant	12	1	12	12		David Huson	0	1	0	0
	Rob Lee	12	1	12	12		Lynn Jones	0	1	0	0
	Derek Povey	12	1	12	12		Chris Sandow	0	1	0	0
	Iain Singer	12	2	24	16	51.	Jaap Jacobs	-0.5	2	-1	0
15.	Steve Froud	11	1	11	11	52.	Richard Bass	-1	1	-1	-1
16.	Alan Sharples	10	1	10	10		John Dalley	-1	1	-1	-1
	Larry Trask	10	2	20	13		Ian Ferguson	-1	1	-1	-1
18.	Len George	9	1	9	9		Nigel Hawthorn	-1	1	-1	-1
	Tim Sharrock	9	1	9	9		John Lee	-1	1	-1	-1
20.	Brian Moore	8.5	2	17	22		Matt Quartermn	-1	1	-1	-1
	Alan Parr	8.5	2	17	16		Keith Shapley	-1	1	-1	-1
22.	Rob Chapman	7.5	2	15	13	59.	Peter Cowling	-1.5	2	-3	2
23.	Ray Harper	7	1	7	7	60.	Michael Woods	-2	1	-2	-2
	John Jones	7	1	7	7	61.	David White	-2.33	3	-7	3
	George North	7	3	21	15	62.	Steve Howe	-2.5	2	-5	0
	Paul Simpkins	7	1	7	7	63.	Gary McNeil	-3	1	-3	-3
27.	Clive Booth	6	1	6	6	64.	Richard Lewis	-4	1	-4	-4
	Keith Harvey	6	1	6	6	65.	Mike Benyon	-5	1	-5	-5
	Paul Tucker	6	1	6	6		Glen Bird	-5	1	-5	-5
30.	Chris Bullock	5	1	5	5		Peter Davies	-5	1	-5	-5
31.	Nicholas Clifton	4	1	4	4		Eddie Griffiths	-5	1	-5	-5
	Derek Crumpton	4	1	4	4		Rick Holman	-5	1	-5	-5
	John Miller	4	1	4	4		John Lambert	-5	1	-5	-5
34.	Peter Rusling	3	1	3	3		Rob Lozynskyj	-5	1	-5	-5
35.	Martin Allen	2.5	2	5	10		John McLaughlin	-5	1	-5	-5
36.	Mike Allaway	2	2	4	9		Lee McNeil	-5	1	-5	-5
	Paul Brine	2	1	2	2		Nick Marshall	-5	2	-10	-5

I think this is enough. Although Sopwith seems to be more popular than it used to be when I did these stats, the list doesn't appear to be any bigger. But then Richard doesn't include players in games unfinished... and there's quite a few of those. This doesn't go down well with my son, Stuart though; he wants to beat his dear ol' dad's score. I don't know about that, but what the hell is Tillson doing at the top, Morris?!

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CENTRAL GAMESTART SERVICE

Zines That Have Received Gamestarts:- (Since last issue) The Question Mark (19th May '84), Psychopath (15th June '84).

List Of Zines Awaiting Regular Starts:-

Sodder (Bill Wright); Rapsallion, Action Replay (Andy Hain), Gazfinc, Quartz (Geoff Kemp), Newspeak (Lee Paddon).

I still haven't heard anything from Simon Billenness (if he's the one that's doing it) about HDF money for Diplomacy box flyers. Is none needed all of a sudden. I have the CGS money, and still haven't collected from other official sources.

JOTTO Turn 1-3

I choose six words from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, each six letters long. Each month you send in one word and I then score each letter against each of my six words. For instance, if you submitted DETOUR and the six secret words were: RESORT, BASKET, GENTLE, PRIEST, MORTAR, BOTTLE the scores would be: 4, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3 respectively. Obvious aim is to find all six words.

When you think you know all six words you may take a guess at them (you must guess all six) - but you must get ALL six right! Get one wrong and you're out. Anagrams of the secret words are accepted. And that's all there is to it... Anyone wanting to start next time should send in 4 guesses to catch up.

|                  |                                           |                 |                                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| James Steel:     | 1st: 131313<br>2nd: 222030<br>3rd: 213121 | Richard Sharp:  | 1st: 313111<br>2nd: 120311<br>3rd: 121112     |
| James Cowie:     | 1st: 231230<br>2nd: 101220<br>3rd: 313321 | George North:   | 1st: 311314<br>2nd: 222011<br>3rd: 121220     |
| Ulf Jiretörn:    | 1st: 222222<br>2nd: 111312<br>3rd: 232030 | Brian Moore:    | 1st: 141100<br>2nd: 120310<br>3rd: 122103     |
| Larry Trask:     | 1st: 121123<br>2nd: 221210<br>3rd: 112221 | Richard Morris: | 1st: 121230<br>2nd: 022102<br>3rd: 321122     |
| Richard Lampard: | 1st: 342211<br>2nd: 322132<br>3rd: 240121 | Tim Collieu:    | 1st: 513322 (1)<br>2nd: 222212<br>3rd: 432222 |
| Nicholas Whyte:  | 1st: 222103<br>2nd: 231312<br>3rd: 221110 |                 |                                               |

Not a bad turnout at all. Looks to be a good start for Tim who must guess what one word is from his score - only another five to go, Tim. Will the others start to panic? It has been known before. George, I can't tell you if I use double letters or not. My God, I can't make it too easy; I am giving away 3 free issues you know! Anyway, for the benefit of my couple of trades I've decided to award a £1 prize if they win (unlikely as that may be). Of course this means I can still keep stuffing Dib through Richard Sharp's letterbox if he wins. That'll teach him to offer to cancel trades for 3 issues to earn his £1 and daring to call me cheapskate... ME!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH comes from Mike Dean in the latest Psychopath (bait enough to catch half a dozen Trasks, I think):-

"The British are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages, but I can accept that the Americans are worse - after all, they can't even speak their own properly!" ((Larry?))



LETTERS

I have an enormous amount of mail this time so I better get started otherwise I'll never get done - might even have to hold some over for next issue.

NICHOLAS WHYTE:

"Does 'zine' rhyme with 'shine' or 'machine'? This is getting to be quite a problem, especially since my brother and several friends set up The Guilder."

((A debatable point. My own view is, even though 'zine is short for magazine/fanzine, and therefore I should suppose rhyme with machine; over the years the apostrophe was dropped, and, to my mind, the word became a word in its own right. It has I think also passed the slang stage. This being the case, I prefer to pronounce it rhyming with 'shine'. 'Zeen' sound too American for my taste.))

oo000oo

GEORGE NORTH:

"The front cover ((of issue 39)) says it all about pop music in Dib. I am the one with the fingers in the ears. No, but I do agree with Martyn Ives, and love Country & Western music. This is probably because one can go into Woolworths, hand over a five pound note, and come out with an armful of oldies. ((And this is your criteria for good music, George?... There has got to be a better way...))

But who cares what other people like. It is boring to listen to and worse to have people telling you what was going on in the mind of the composer. With me it is simply a matter of waiting until the house is empty and bunging on a slow mournful number that I can howl to while I am typing. Otherwise it is a sing-along and a jig around the room to Chas & Dave.

If I must mention the pop records themselves, well all I can say is I like to have the words written on the inside sleeve - and my vote goes out to Bonnie Tyler who does just this. We make a great duo, you understand. If anybody else does the same then I must have missed them."

((Yes, well, I can see why you would want the house empty, George. My brain teeters on the brink of insanity at the thought of you singing and 'jigging' along to Duran Duran's 'Reflex', or Queen's 'I want to to be free', if they had the lyrics on the sleeve!))

oo000oo

NIALL LITTON:

"I definitely belong to the George North School of Diplomacy! ((That's sad...)) There are, however, slight variation. Firstly I use plastic bags rather than shoeboxes, and my collection of these has been moving around the house from corner to corner for some months now as we've had some building work to do which meant all the bags got jumbled up and dusty and started looking alike. They have since been ignored because every time I've made a move to look at them and sort them out, I hear a little voice telling me that 'we' have more important things to do... like paint the bathroom/bedroom/hall etc (and there are lots of etceteras).

The second variation is to never throw away letters. They are filed carefully in the nearest plastic bag - nasty and nice alike. The third variation is that I don't use polystyrene ceiling tiles any more. I pin my maps to a cork floor tile (1/4" thick ones - not the loosely packed plaster-cork tiles which are thicker, but don't hold the pins very well and make you smell rather funny) - they are more durable.

Anyway once I've (sorry we've) got the house straight, I hope I can put this scientific approach to the test in Dib."

((That's an idea - I wonder if I kept moving my pile of zines around the house whether Jan would notice them? As for maps: I use an A4 map covered with clear contact sheets and use chinograph pencils. There's no pins or anything to fall

off that way. Also it can easily be dumped into a bag, briefcase, or whatever.))

oo000oo

And on to the subject of food...

LARRY TRASK:

"Turning now to a slightly less inflammatory subject, ((Hah, that's what you think!)) British cuisine (sic), I'm afraid I have failed to make myself clear. My point is NOT that it is impossible to prepare tasty British food in principle. It is rather that one does not encounter tasty British in practice. If you walk into an eatery in Punxsutawney, or Bilbao, or Ankara, you'll...nearly always get something that's a pleasure to eat. The same is not true in England. For, example, several years ago I had occasions to have a meal in a German motorway rest stop at 3.00am - and it was delicious! Then again, last week my wife and I had lunch in Manchester. I had a steak sandwich - it was greasy, tough and completely tasteless. She had fish and chips, supposedly an English specialty - the fish was almost completely inedible. And, dammit, this is what happens when you have a meal in England, unless you've been careful enough to select an Indian, Greek or Chinese restaurant. Most English people seem not to notice the difference; I can only assume you all have your taste buds amputated at birth in a kind of bizarre circumcision ritual."

((Hmm, an interesting analogy. Anyway, anyone who goes into a restaurant to order a steak sandwich deserves all he gets. But, I have to agree, 99% of British eating places can be rubbish. I think maybe it's because the British don't like to complain. Not like the French and others who will sample and haggle over food. Either it's because they don't wish to 'show themselves up', or food as a pastime is not an important enough subject to worry one's head about. Personally, if I get served a bad wine, or a tough greasy steak, I'd complain loudly and send it back (much to Jan's embarrassment). But this is merely because I paid, supposedly, for good service. Chucking a piece of leather in front of me is an insult and not what I would class as service.))

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JOHN PIGGOTT (& Family):

"Thanks for Dib 39. Since I last wrote Pat has had her baby (the essential facts are May 26th; 2.10 am, 8lb 13oz; Matthew James) and now that I've got three of the little ~~was~~ angels to put up with I can only marvel at Jan's policy of sensible restraint. ((Well I married her so she could keep me to the manner in which I was accustomed, as it is I only get about 75% of her time and attention now, think what any more children might lead to, I could be ignored even...))

More seriously, although 'mother and child are both doing well' in the standard terms, Pat has chosen this moment to catch mumps. Would you believe it? Her sense of timing is beyond compare!

All of which leaves me pretty disgruntled. Since Pat was admitted to hospital, then released with the infant, within the span of the Bank Holiday Weekend, I was unable to claim any free days off from the office. And now, as I had mumps as a child, I am declared immune and a non-carrier and therefore exempt from quarantine. Still no days off! ((Yes, it's a hard life alright being a father.))

Anyway, I must be brief in this letter in view of my awesome duties elsewhere. But I can't resist commenting on Larry Trask's quite unjustified comments about British Cuisine (and cooking). I wonder, has he ever encountered any? Has he ever bopped a striking miner over the head with a black pudding? Pelted a Scottish militant with a haggis? Has he ever partaken of the humble pint of Canvey Island cockles? (Actually, cockles are landed on Leigh-on-Sea, but I feel a soupcon of poetic justice is called for.) Tchah, he knows nothing of real British Food! His hares remain unjugged; his eels unjellied; his kidneys undeveloped. As my great-grandfather Alderman Zadock Piggott used to say (he was the Founder of Piggott's Shoddy Tripe Limited, three times Lord Mayor of Accrington), "'Appen tha's niver et t'mooshy peas on Ilkla' Moor baht 'at,

sithee." Bah, this wretched Colonial should return to his pecan pie and his Hominy grits; you would not find me anywhere near a bowl of gumbo.

On the other hand, Larry's views on pop music are a model of good sense."

((I don't think Larry has had a black pudding... or, if it comes to that cockles, jellied eels, deviled kidneys and mushy peas (can't include haggis, it's Scottish), but he's had a steak sandwich, does that count? Mind you, I've never had jugged hare or jellied eels if it comes to that - the eels look revolting. But then the culinary delights you mention, John, are what you might consider to be 'an acquired taste'. I can't think offhand of any other countries besides England and France that has food falling into this type of category. We have our jellied eels, black pudding, cockles and suchlike. The French have frogslegs, snails, and Charles Aznavour (not a food I know but certainly an acquired taste). I did hear of one country producing cans of honeyed ants (or was it locusts?) as a speciality, but can't remember which one. Anyway, I'm not sure I'd class these sort of things as good food, would you? Except maybe snails - I did once eat them and enjoy them (L'escarot, because, well, it was at the Hilton). In the end it still comes down to who did the cooking. You know yourself that some fish and chip shops can be rubbish, whereas ours down the road (and indeed I suppose many others) is superb.))

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R.J. LAMPARD:

"Viz the whole musical debate that permeates Dib at the moment - because it's such an important part of many peoples' relaxation, music cannot be written off just like that even if it is not particularly durable. A few thoughts I've had on the matter:-

1. If people hear enough of a certain style of music, and they don't dislike it, it becomes 'an acquired taste'. Hence those people who hear very little classical music never get a real opportunity to move away from the much more socially acceptable pop.
2. People get put off classical music in the same way that people get put off decent 'heavy' literature by finding a few critically acclaimed books unreadable.
3. (Apologies, folks!) Like sheep, many people do follow social trends.

Personally my taste is patchy and I don't like all of the works of any one group/composer - which is at least not a fanatical attitude."

((Short, sharp, and very much to the point - I can do nothing else but agree as my attitudes and thoughts on music are very similar to Richard's. But, what on earth is classed as 'decent heavy literature'? I've often wondered what titles academics insist on calling 'required and essential reading' to broaden one's vocabulary. Is there some guide? Because I find more and more nowadays (since doing the zine) that I get quite frustrated at having something to say and not knowing quite how to say it. The amount words I know are not enough. Is there a 'ceiling' of how many words an individual can have in his vocabulary; say 100 thousand for writers, 50 thousand for journalists, 6-10 thousand for the average man in the street, and 50 for most zine editors? Maybe I just cannot absorb any more... perhaps I should try reading something other than Science Fiction/Fantasy, Stephen King and James Herbert horror, and Louis L'Amour westerns - but what? Hands up those at the back that said Enid Blyton!))

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LARRY TRASK:

"Steve Norledge reminds me that pop bands need to make themselves heard. Well, yes, Steve, but does this mean they have to obliterate all other sounds whatever within a 200 yard radius? It's true that orchestras have lots of people, but they rarely attempt to overpower the audience with sheer noise - all those people are there to provide subtlety and variety, not volume. Anyway, real music need not be produced by orchestras. String quartets produce splendid

results with just four people and no amplifiers, and Andres Segovia, to take one example, provides some of the finest music you'll ever hear with one Spanish Guitar, no backup and no bloody amplifiers.

Mike Deans asks me whether I believe it takes less skill to play an electric guitar than a real one. Yes Mike, I do. In principle, surely, one might develop as much skill on the electric item as on the real thing, but in practice that's not what happens. I scoff at your implication that the average adolescents who perpetrate pop offences are displaying as much skill as, say, John Williams, or even the Lebanese guitarist who used to keep us all entranced for hours after work in the days when I was working at Brookhaven Lab. But even if they did, you wouldn't be able to tell, because the level of amplification they use simply destroys any subtlety of tone or technique they might have coaxed out of their instruments. It's as though a modern would-be Rembrandt were to paint pictures using nothing but the most brilliant, supersaturated fluorescent colours - your eyes would ache so from trying to look at the result that you couldn't possibly notice anything beyond the blinding visual 'noise'.

Martyn Ives introduces a welcome change of pace by plugging country and western (eh?). Well, I don't know much C&W he gets to hear in the Royal Marines; but if he had grown up, as I did, in the very shadow of the transmitting tower of Radio Station WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia, the premier C&W station in the northeastern USA, pouring out 50,000 watts of nasal droning 24 hours a day, punctured only by hillbilly disc jockeys selling records of "Little Cindy praying to Sweet Jesus" - well, he might have a different view of things. I tell you Tom, you haven't experienced nausea until you've heard a Bible Belt country and western radio station doing its stuff."

((The way you put it, Larry, it's enough to put anyone off. Ah, these much-travelled jet-setters...))

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Some favourable comments on John Piggott's Hobby History piece last issue....

MARTIN CLIFFORD-KING:

"I found the piece by John Piggott fascinating - I hope you can bully him to do some more."

((And...))

BILL HAYGARTH:

"Thanks for Dib 39 - up to your usual high standard - well done, keep it up. I was especially interested to read John Piggott's piece about his 'Nationwide' appearance - thanks for asking him to write it."

((Thanks for the kind words, Bill. Yes, John's piece was interesting and I'm glad you liked it. Certainly hobby history seems to generate a lot of interest these days... especially the way John writes it. I'll try and coax him of course, but I'm sure others must have tried - John used to publish the once excellent zine, Ethil the Frog, which in its heyday even came to rival Sharp's notorious Dolchstoss for wit, appeal, and sensible chat. Sadly though, no more - though a rumour has been spreading that Ethil will once again rise phoenix-like from the ashes, as Mad Policy and Dolchstoss did. It seems that these old men just don't know when to quit!))

BILL (CONT.):

"Now, about this game and the re-adjudication, I don't want you to think that I am dissatisfied with the way the game is being run because I am not. I think all the games are run in a truly professional manner and I am very grateful for the good, regular turn-around, which, sadly has not been my experience with other zines. I also fully appreciate that with 15-odd games to run the occasional mistake is bound to creep in. So, if I did appear to criticise, Tom, I apologise as that was not my intention."

((Ah, would that I always got letters like this... You see, you lot, this is how

replies to my mistakes SHOULD be!

But seriously, Bill (God, I do hate starting sentences with 'but seriously'), I didn't know I sounded so gruff/off-putting on the phone. Generally when people phone to point out a mistake, I do my infallible bit as a joke, trying to make it seem as though it's their fault. Force of habit dealing with the likes of Clifton and Mike Close I suppose. I'll admit, although I think I do a pretty good job keeping an eye on my games, sometimes mistakes do inevitably creep in. My method of just checking the moves off, not using a Diplomacy board may leave a lot to be desired, but I find it the best way for me. Please accept MY apologies if I in any way made you feel uncomfortable and that you were doing something wrong.))

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RICHARD SHARP:

"Pete Mason's letter may give your readers a false impression, and if it doesn't your reply certainly will. Apart from the obvious point that no one except the stabber can know the reasoning behind a stab, I should point out that the comments in Dolchstoss are so superficial as to be almost moronic. However, since it appears that Pete is not alone in his delusion, I shall in future not be printing comments on novice games. I feel I should also make the point that if Pete didn't like the comments, all he had to do was to write to me and ask me to stop - this would have been more profitable, as well as more polite, than whinging to you about it. ((Whinging is a bit strong, Richard, admit it, it's never easy for us literary geniuses to take constructive criticism.))

As for you, Tweedy, how dare you claim to have played in Dolchstoss! People will think I let just anyone in. You were of course relegated to the supplement, where the level of comment made that in the zine look like inspired strategic analysis. ((And the games inspired strategic play!)) In fact there hardly ever was any comment.

When you say that 'to your knowledge' I have never won a game, you say more about your knowledge than you do about my play. It is of course extremely unwise to rate players as 'good' or 'bad' on the strength of the number of wins they have had. ((A fact about which I agree entirely and said so last issue.)) Unfortunately, all sorts of random factors can help decide who wins a postal game. One of these, undoubtedly, is one's level of personal notoriety. When no one had heard of me, I used to do quite well. In the heyday of Dolchstoss I soon started to do less well, regularly being set upon by hordes of little boys simply because they had heard of me. As a result, I became very selective about which zines and games I played in, and so got some much more enjoyable games, though the calibre of the opposition made it very difficult to win them.

Anyway, for the record, I have in fact won three UK postal games of diplomacy, and drawn at least half a dozen more. I don't think this proves much about whether I'm a good player or not, though - that's something you can only tell from playing against a person (or possibly from GMing them) and you've never done either."

((I'll admit my knowledge of how you've played is not based on personal knowledge of the games you've played in, because as you say, I have never played in a game with you or GM'd a game you have been in. I, you might say, rashly, based my evidence of your bad playing on the latest Wink Thompson Diplomacy stats. Now because of my bad memory I can't quote figures at this time, but I seem to remember you were way down the list (somewhere near the bottom) with quite a lot of games played. This was why I said last issue "to my knowledge" and "IF one is talking in standards of winning games as being good". On this subject I was prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt.

However, your comments in Dolchstoss games are a different matter - it's no use trying to wriggle out of it. Of course you are correct when you say I never actually played in Dolchstoss, and that I was only fobbed off with a supplement game, but come on now, do you really expect all those people out there to believe you yourself actually wrote "moronic" comments? Poor old Clive Booth (may he rest in peace) would have a field day with that one.

Anyway, there is no getting away from the fact that you did let me get my grubby hands on issues of Dolchstoss and allowed me to pay exorbitant prices for

them. And when all said and done, I have personally experienced your comments to the supplement games - so how can I possibly not remember the way you failed us poor outcasts?

Okay, so I'll be serious for a moment. All that I said in the first paragraph to Pete Mason was correct; your comments, slight as you say they were, did most certainly affect our game. You don't/didn't realise, but to novices you are the great Richard Sharp. I kid you not, you were the man who wrote the book that was to become the Diplomacy bible of its time. Your comments wouldn't affect me now, as indeed they wouldn't any other experienced Diplomacy player. But believe me, novices pay attention to everything, and if you check your games, you'll probably find all complaints will be from novice games. I'd suggest you keep your comments for veteran games going, because they are very interesting to the average reader and they can do no harm - but perhaps treat the novice games a bit more discretely?))

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NICHOLAS WHYTE:

"I thought I would comment on Pete Mason's letter as a fellow-player in his Dolchstoss game. I must agree, your presentation without comments (except for the game headings, of course) is probably more geared to letting the players get on with it. But I suspect there are hidden advantages to the Sharp method. For one thing, it keeps up interest as far as the players are concerned. How many NMR's per issue do you get, Tom? How many has Richard had since the restart (though as most games are new ones this is probably less than representative)?

Now, I don't know how specific I can be here, but the fact is Sharp has got it wrong on several occasions, ((Yes, that seems specific enough)) witness his delusions on my own attitudes to a couple of other players - at least two of whom (not necessarily those two) will be reading this."

((Ho ho, Roll up! Roll up! take a Richard Sharp doll home and stick pins in it... You must remember, Nicholas, most NMR's come from novices, and because I control the Diplomacy CGS Dib gets more than its fair share of novices (not that I'm complaining about that). But this being the case, keep an eye on Richard's novice games in a few seasons time - on average two novices seem to drop out per game.))

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ALAN FROST:

"You say in the press (('Macha' last season)) that, in my scissors: F(Gre)-AEG, F(ION)-AEG, if F(Gre) is dislodged it still stands off F(ION)-AEG, because the dislodgement comes into effect after the initial move. Agreed, but is it not also true that "...if two units are ordered to the same space, and one of them is dislodged by a unit coming from that space, the other unit may move." (1971 Rule book, bottom of page 5)?"

((Ah yes, but that's a different situation. In the first instance you had both units move to the same BLANK area and one unit [F(Gre)] being dislodged from another direction. In the second instance, that which you describe from the rule book, there just simply is no stand-off. F(Gre) would be pushed back by a supposedly superior supported movement from AEG.

e.g. AUSTRIA: \*F(Gre)-AEG, F(ION)-AEG

TURKEY: F(AEG)-Gre, A(Bul) S F(AEG)-Gre

The Austrian F(Gre) would have to retreat, but F(ION) would succeed by moving in behind, unless it was stood off from another direction - e.g. a Turkish F(Con)-AEG.))

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LARRY TRASK:

"LARRY TRASK:

"So, Iain Forsyth believes that, 'sport should be kept above political bickering and double standards', eh? And frowns on 'those who attempt to

restrict the actions and choices of others', does he? Well, let's look at the facts.

First of all, it was not the English rugby tour protesters who introduced politics and double standards into sport in South Africa - it was the South African government, if indeed the inhuman racist tyranny installed by Pretoria can be dignified with the term 'politics'. No other government in the world, not even that of the Soviet Union, has attempted political interference with sports on a scale that compares with the installation of apartheid in South Africa. Where is Iain Forsyth's condemnation of this state of affairs?

Moreover, the English rugby players had a free choice as to whether to go to South Africa or not, and they are unlikely to face any penalty worse than the refusal of other sportsmen to compete against them. The victims of the South African police state, in contrast, have no choice at all. They are forcibly removed from their homes, often forcibly separated from their families, and dumped in barren wastelands without prospect of a decent life. They are condemned to poverty, exploitation, disease and starvation; those who attempt to protest are beaten, murdered or tossed in jail to rot for decades. Where is Iain's righteous indignation at those who restrict the actions and choices of others?

The removal of politics from sport in South Africa lies entirely in the hands of the seedy rabble who control the South African government. The few feeble cosmetic relaxations in apartheid in sport which have been allowed in recent years are the direct consequences of international pressure, and not of any change in heart by the South African leadership. If Iain is as genuinely concerned as he makes out, he should be taking his complaints to Pretoria, not to England."

((Although I detest South African apartheid and all that goes with it, my personal views on athletes/entertainers going to this country cannot be changed. In a supposedly democratic Western world, it's my belief if someone wants to go to South Africa for whatever reason, they should be allowed to do so without the threat of some course of punishment. In my world, if I'm threatened I get angry and fight back (in this case I'd most likely decide to go out of spite). If I lived in the Soviet Union I'd probably rethink this strategy - thank God I'm more fortunate then. So why can't we just do away with our government and society's threats first, eh Larry?))

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BRIAN MOORE:

"Collecting IS my subject. I've been in this hobby for around 4 years and still have every letter and zine I've ever received. Along with my Scrapbooks, cigarette cards, postcards, books, information on places I've been, records, computer programs, games, tickets, magazines on computers, Dr Who Monthly, Blake's 7 Monthly (every issue). You can see I hardly ever throw anything out unless it gets too much for Anne and she twists my arm a bit - but I usually retort with "they'll be worth something one day..." which usually does the trick. Can collecting be inherited? My Grandfather was a collector of anything as well. In case you're wondering, I did collect stamps, but sold them to start collecting postcards and cigarette cards!"

((Yes, but where do you PUT it all? Jan gets fed up if I leave only a dozen or so zines lying around, along with the various letters, orders etc. God knows what Richard Walkerdine does with his Zine Archives! Claire must be either a very understanding and adoring wife, or Walkerdine is the tyrant, alround cad and wife-beater I suspect him to be...))

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TIM COLLIEU:

"The recent correspondence in Dib about war and the 'romantic' notion surrounding it has been very interesting. I agree with what you say about the civilians at home promoting the 'pro patria mori' myth. However another important factor is the dramatisation of the valour and humour involved in war. I'm particularly thinking of the role played by such stirring speeches as those